

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES

P.O. Box 419064, Rancho Cordova, CA 95741-9064

**HURRICANE KATRINA INFORMATION**

September 13, 2005

LCSA LETTER: 05-15

ALL IV-D DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: HURRICANE KATRINA DISASTER RECOVERY UPDATE

Reason for this Transmittal

- ☐ State Law or Regulation Change
- ☐ Federal Law or Regulation Change
- ☐ Court Order or Settlement Change
- ☐ Clarification requested by One or More Counties
- ☒ Initiated by DCSS

As you know, Hurricane Katrina is adversely impacting the lives of children and families primarily in Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana. Over the last week there have been several conference calls with the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) related to the delivery of child support checks to areas where postal service has been disrupted. The purpose of this letter is to summarize the information provided in these calls and to provide guidance to local child support agencies (LCSAs) regarding change of address requests coming from custodial parents (CPs) over the telephone. In addition, this letter provides information regarding data OCSE has asked states to collect related to this disaster.

Summarized below is information received from Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi and issues discussed during the conference calls.

- The State Disbursement Units (SDUs) in each of the three affected states are fully operational and continue to receive support payments on IV-D and non-IV-D cases. Employers, non-custodial parents (NCPs) and other states should continue to send support payments, including Electronic Funds Transfer/Electronic Data Interchange transactions, to the SDUs.
- The SDUs in Mississippi and Louisiana are currently holding all support payments received for CPs who reside in zip codes where mail delivery has been suspended by the United States Postal Service (USPS). As of September 9, 2005, Alabama reported that all mail has resumed and they are not holding any checks.
- Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi will work with all states in getting support payments to CPs who are now in shelters and other locations. For example, Mississippi will work with Alabama to get support payments to a CP who has relocated from Mississippi to the home of a relative in Alabama.

Similarly, Louisiana will work with Texas in getting support payments to a CP from the New Orleans area who is now in a shelter in Texas.

- Employers have developed a format for providing the SDU information received from CPs and NCPs regarding the current location of CPs who receive support payments from the SDU (An informational copy of this form is attached to this letter).
- The SDU contact information provided by the three states is as follows:

Louisiana:

SDU/Customer Service Line: (225) 922-8100 or (888) 524-3578

SDU Email: Laeft@acs-inc.com

Contact Person: Trina Richardson
Trina.richardson@acs-inc.com

LCSAs can also call 1-800-256-4650.

Alabama

SDU/Customer Service Line: 1-866-252-4453 or (334) 242-9300

Customer Svc Email: CS@dhr.state.al.us

Contact person: Minnie Thomas
mthomas@dhr.state.al.us

LCSAs can call 1-800-951-1274. In addition, Alabama has established a dedicated email address for anyone with child support related questions/issues. That email address is childsupportstorm@dhr.state.al.us.

Mississippi

Contact person: Patricia Oluade
poluade@mdhs.state.ms.us
(601) 359-4861

LCSAs can call 1-866-388-2836.

Support Payments Sent Directly to Custodial Parties in the Affected States

The Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) has recently been contacted by CPs residing in the states affected by Hurricane Katrina who have attempted to complete a change of address over the telephone with their LCSA. Some LCSAs have been reluctant to complete these changes of address without a written request. However, given that many of the victims of the hurricane no longer have records or legal documents to prove their identity, and consistent with recent federal guidelines relaxing some of the documentation requirements for federal programs, LCSAs should exercise flexibility in accommodating these requests. For example, if the LCSA receives a telephonic request for address change from a CP and has information that the CPs

current address is in one of the affected states, the LCSA should advise the CP that for security purposes, they will be asked to confirm case specific information prior to completing the address change. LCSAs should ask the CP to confirm their address of record and provide other identifying information (such as social security number, date of birth etc.). This information should be documented in the case file and the address change completed as requested unless the LCSA has reason to believe that the request is fraudulent.

Mail Delivery In Affected States

Each LCSA must determine whether it will hold warrants/checks for CPs in the affected states until contacted by the CP with new address information or mail service resumed. The USPS has provided the following information which should be helpful in making this determination:

- The USPS has suspended mail delivery to areas affected by the disaster. The USPS will hold the mail at a facility geographically close to the CP address where the CP can pick up the mail. Alternatively, if the CP completes a change of address order, the USPS will forward the mail in accordance with its procedures.
- LCSAs may obtain information on zip codes affected by the disaster by accessing the USPS' website at www.usps.com and then connecting to "Hurricane Katrina Service Updates" site. This site also contains news releases with the latest information on the delivery of mail, including information on the establishment of temporary locations for Social Security check distribution. We encourage you to visit this site, on a regular basis, over the next weeks and months for updated information. It should be noted that we were advised by USPS that while the delivery of standard mail has been suspended in many zip codes, first class mail delivery (letters with a 37¢ stamp) is available in many of these areas.
- USPS is developing a webpage at www.usps.com where a customer can enter their zip code and learn where their mail is being held.
- USPS strongly recommends that customers in the disaster areas complete a change of address order with their new address (e.g., Houston Astrodome if that is where they are residing temporarily). Customers can file for a change of address using the "Change of Address" feature at www.usps.com or by calling 1-800-ASK-USPS (1-800-275-8777). If a customer does not have access to the Internet or telephone, he/she should go to the nearest post office to complete a change of address form.
- The USPS follows the instructions from the mailer so if the LCSA's mailing envelope states "DO NOT FORWARD" the USPS will return the mail to the sender as instructed. If the CP has completed a change of address and the

warrant mailing envelope is not annotated with "DO NOT FORWARD", the warrant will be forwarded to the correct address.

Identifying Affected Cases By Zip Code

CASES Counties

The following instructions for identifying warrants going to CPs in the affected states/zip codes has been provided by the CASES consortia:

The affected warrants can be reviewed on the CASES warrant screens. The Index Warrant Rolls (IWR) screen displays the warrant rolls for a specific day. Warrant roll #1 is where most of the review would be needed. The display on the warrant rolls is based on the zip codes associated to the warrant payee address. Select Warrant roll #1 on IWR and go to the Warrant Roll List screen. Select the first warrant number X and hit the enter key. This will take you to the Warrant Information (WAR) screen. You can change the warrant number on the WAR screen to determine the warrants associated with the 4 or 5 affected zip codes. These warrants can then be pulled awaiting a new mailing address for the CP or postal update that mail service has been restored.

ARS Counties

The ARS consortia reports that lists have been provided to the ARS counties that identify cases with zip codes in the affected states. If the zip code is for the SDU in the affected states, those warrants are being disbursed. If the zip code is for a direct pay to the CP, those warrants are being held pending receipt of a change of address, conversion to EFT or resumption of mail service.

Data Collection

During the September 9, 2005, conference call, OCSE advised states that they will be asked to collect data concerning Hurricane Evacuees such as the number of applicants applying for new services, number of evacuees who had child support cases in the affected states and who are now reapplying for services in the new state, child support payments to CPs in affected areas being held, and the number of child support payments to CPs in affected areas now being released.

OCSE has advised that they will collect this data from all states every Monday, Wednesday and Friday beginning immediately and continue until further notice.

Each LCSA is asked to identify a contact person who will be responsible for providing this information to DCSS by 10:00 a.m. on each of these days. Please contact Linda Sekany by email with the name of this person no later than close of business today (September 13, 2005).

The first report to OCSE will be due on Wednesday September 14, 2005 at 10:00 a.m.

Other Information

Louisiana Child Support staff reminded states that New Orleans is in the process of complete evacuation. Therefore any locate information reflecting a New Orleans address is not valid. In addition, Louisiana has asked for states to be patient when attempting to communicate with them regarding Uniform Interstate Family Support Act petitions due to the disruption in program operations caused by the disaster.

We will continue to provide you with updated information as it becomes available. If you have any questions or concerns please contact Linda Sekany, at (916) 464-5340 or by email at Linda.Sekany@dcss.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

o/s/SANDRA O. POOLE

SANDRA O. POOLE
Deputy Director
Child Support Services Division

Attachment

cc: Child Support Directors Association

CHILD SUPPORT INFORMATION FORM**Please provide information about yourself:**

State you are receiving Child Support from: _____

Name: _____
Last First

Date of Birth: _____

Social Security Number: _____

Child Support Case number (if known): _____

Please provide information about the non-custodial parent:Name: _____
Last First

Date of Birth (if known): _____

Please provide information about your child(ren):Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____
Last FirstName: _____ Date of Birth: _____
Last FirstName: _____ Date of Birth: _____
Last FirstName: _____ Date of Birth: _____
Last First**Please complete the following section if you wish for your child support payments to be mailed to a new address:**_____
Address Line 1_____
Address Line 2_____
City State Zip Code_____
Printed Name_____
Signature Date**If you reside in a shelter, please provide shelter identification and address information.**